



State of Tennessee

Justin P. Wilson, State Comptroller

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Former Monterey Police Chief Kept Town-Owned Bulldozer on His Property

Allegedly, it was supposed to be used to clear a field for a police firing range. But documents and other evidence reviewed by the Comptroller's Division of Investigations suggest that a bulldozer owned by the town of Monterey ended up on the former police chief's property wasn't going to be used for that purpose.

The investigators' findings were part of a report that was publicly released today.

Monterey town officials obtained the bulldozer in early June of last year through the state's military surplus program. In an agreement with the military surplus office, the police chief said that the bulldozer would only be used for law enforcement purposes and would not be leased to others, sold or otherwise disposed of by the town.

According to interviews with officials who were working for the town at the time, when the town received the bulldozer from military surplus, it was transported directly to the police chief's property so a blade could be attached. The bulldozer was later moved back to town property after questions arose in a public meeting regarding its location.

A lease signed by the town's former mayor and the former police chief seemingly explained the delivery and presence of town equipment on private land owned by the police chief. That lease document was not created until after citizens had made inquiries about why the bulldozer was on the property.

Investigators determined that the lease had been backdated to show that it was executed before the bulldozer had been delivered to the town. The lease was not actually written until five days after the bulldozer had been removed from the chief's property.

Having town equipment on the former police chief's private property without a valid contract in place exposed the city to unknown and potentially unlimited liability for any damages that could have occurred.

The police chief has resigned from his post.

Investigators also found that town officials improperly used a vehicle seized by law enforcement and kept an abandoned vehicle they were required by law to sell at public auction.

“Just as it is important to guard against fraud, waste and abuse of public money, it is important to prevent publicly-owned equipment and items from being used for personal benefit,” said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. “It did not appear from what our investigators found that the bulldozer was being used for the public purpose that Monterey town officials said it would. I encourage citizens who believe they have information about fraud, waste or abuse of public funds or public property to contact our toll-free hotline at 1-800-232-5454.”

To view the full report online, go to: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/ia/>

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